

December 16, 2021

Office of the
Prime Minister



Cabinet du
Premier ministre

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0A2

Dear Minister Blair:

Thank you for agreeing to serve Canadians as President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness.

From the beginning of this pandemic, Canadians have faced a once-in-a-century challenge. And through it all, from coast to coast to coast, people have met the moment. When it mattered most, Canadians adapted, helped one another, and stayed true to our values of compassion, courage and determination. That is what has defined our path through this pandemic so far. And that is what will pave our way forward.

During a difficult time, Canadians made a democratic choice. They entrusted us to finish the fight against COVID-19 and support the recovery of a strong middle class. At the same time, they also gave us clear direction: to take bold, concrete action to build a healthier, more resilient future. That is what Canadians have asked us to do and it is exactly what our Government is ready to deliver. We will work to build that brighter future through continued collaboration, engagement, and the use of science and evidence-based decision-making. With an unwavering focus on delivering results, we will work constructively with Parliamentarians and maintain our strong partnerships with provincial, territorial and municipal governments and Indigenous partners. This decade has had an incredibly difficult start, but this is the moment to rebuild a more resilient, inclusive and stronger country for everyone.

The science is clear. Canadians have been clear. We must not only continue taking real climate action, we must also move faster and go further. As Canadians are increasingly experiencing across the country, climate change is an existential threat. Building a cleaner, greener future will require a sustained and collaborative effort from all of us. As Minister, I expect you to seek opportunities within your portfolio to support our whole-of-government effort to reduce emissions, create clean jobs and address the climate-related challenges communities are already facing.

This year, Canadians were horrified by the discovery of unmarked graves and burial sites near former residential schools. These discoveries underscore that we must move faster on the path of reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. We know that reconciliation cannot come without truth and our Government will

continue to invest in that truth. As Ministers, each of us has a duty to further this work, both collectively and as individuals. Consequently, I am directing every Minister to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to work in partnership with Indigenous Peoples to advance their rights.

We must continue to address the profound systemic inequities and disparities that remain present in the core fabric of our society, including our core institutions. To this effect, it is essential that Canadians in every region of the country see themselves reflected in our Government's priorities and our work. As Minister, I expect you to include and collaborate with various communities, and actively seek out and incorporate in your work, the diverse views of Canadians. This includes women, Indigenous Peoples, Black and racialized Canadians, newcomers, faith-based communities, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ2 Canadians, and, in both official languages.

Across our work, we remain committed to ensuring that public policies are informed and developed through an intersectional lens, including applying frameworks such as Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) and the quality of life indicators in decision-making.

Canadians continue to rely on journalists and journalism for accurate and timely news. I expect you to maintain professional and respectful relationships with journalists to ensure that Canadians are well informed and have the information they need to keep themselves and their families safe.

Throughout the course of the pandemic, Canadians and their governments have adapted to new realities. Governments must draw on lessons learned from the pandemic to further adapt and develop more agile and effective ways to serve Canadians. To this end, I expect all Ministers to evaluate ways we can update our practices to ensure our Government continues to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

The success of this Parliament will require Parliamentarians, both in the House of Commons and the Senate, to work together across all parties to get big things done for Canadians. I expect you to maintain constructive relationships with your Opposition Critics and coordinate any legislation with the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. As Minister, you are accountable to Parliament both individually, for your style of leadership and the performance of your responsibilities, and collectively, in support of our Ministry and decisions taken by Cabinet. *Open and Accountable Government* sets out these core principles and the standards of conduct expected of you and your office. I expect you to familiarize yourself with this document, which outlines my expectations for each member of the Ministry.

Our platform lays out an ambitious agenda. While finishing the fight against the pandemic must remain our central focus, we must continue building a strong middle class and work toward a better future where everyone has a real and fair chance at success and no one is left behind.

As the President of the Queen's Privy Council and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, you will exercise leadership and coordinate efforts to strengthen emergency management in Canada, ensuring a strategic, integrated and proactive approach across all hazards, including public health emergencies. As a priority, you will continue to work closely with provinces, territories, municipalities and Indigenous partners to take strong action to prepare for future emergencies, including extreme weather events caused by climate change, with a focus on proactive prevention/mitigation efforts and ensuring robust response and recovery capabilities.

To realize these objectives, I ask that you achieve results for Canadians by delivering the following commitments.

- With the support of the Privy Council Office, play a coordinating and convening role to support me and Cabinet colleagues through acute phases of rapid emergency responses.
- Provide regular updates to me and Cabinet on Canada's preparedness and response across all hazards.
- Bolster national resilience and readiness for future pandemics and other emergencies through enhancing the management of strategic stockpiles, improving the operation of health surveillance systems and modernizing how we deliver services and benefits to Canadians in times of crisis.
- Strengthen governance, coordination and integration across all hazards, recognizing emergency management is a whole of society priority, and continue to engage with provinces, territories and Indigenous partners to implement the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Action Plan for emergency management and advance initiatives to enhance Canada's resilience.
- Work with the Minister of Public Safety, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Minister of Transport and Minister of Health, among other colleagues, to ensure the Government of Canada continues to be prepared to proactively mitigate and respond to emerging incidents and hazards.
- Strengthen Canada's all hazards approach to emergency management, drawing on best practice of our Five Eyes partners by:
 - Renewing the Federal Emergency Response Plan;
 - Developing a national risk profile to inform decision-making and planning;

- Conducting a review of the roles and responsibilities of federal emergency operations centres;
- Working with federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous partners to assess emergency management capabilities and identify priorities to enhance mitigation, preparedness and response efforts; and
- Assessing the response to Requests for Federal Assistance from provinces and territories, including assistance from the Canadian Armed Forces.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements Program by engaging experts to bring forward recommendations and program amendments.
- Support me in expanding the Office of the National Security and Intelligence Advisor as climate change increasingly impacts our domestic and global context.
- Continue to improve emergency management and enhance federal readiness through the coordination of comprehensive whole-of-government all hazards exercises.
- Work with the Minister of Natural Resources to take steps to establish an international centre of excellence in Canada focused on firefighter training and coordination and wildfire management, and to engage with the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre.
- In consultation with Indigenous communities, experts, provinces, territories and municipalities, develop a whole-of-government planning and preparedness strategy to ensure the Government of Canada is fully prepared to protect lives and livelihoods from the catastrophic impacts of climate change.
- Work with the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons in their work to develop a plan to both make Parliament a more inclusive place for families and to respond with greater agility in the event of a future national health crisis.
- With the support of the Chief Science Advisor, work to further incorporate the use of science across all elements of emergency preparedness.
- Take action to help Canadians be prepared for, and recover from the impact of floods in high risk areas by:
 - With the support of the Minister of Natural Resources, creating a portal informed by mapping to provide centralized access to information on flood risks as well as resources and suggestions on how best to protect their homes and communities;
 - Creating a low-cost national flood insurance program to protect homeowners who are at high risk of flooding and do not have adequate insurance protection;

- Developing strategies, in partnerships with the insurance industry and private sector, to lower insurance premiums and identify cost-effective ways to protect communities and homes from climate impacts; and
- Co-Chairing on behalf of the federal government, the joint Committee of British Columbia and Government of Canada ministers on disaster response and climate resilience, ensuring effective coordination across all orders of government, including with Indigenous communities, and that lessons learned from the recent climate-related floods and fires are translated into effective policy action.
- Work with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister of Public Safety, and with support of the Minister of Natural Resources, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, and the Sustainable Finance Action Council, to develop a climate data strategy to ensure that the private sector and communities have access to data to inform planning and infrastructure investments.
- Work with the Minister Natural Resources and Minister of Public Safety to make our communities safe and increase forest resilience to wildfire, including training 1,000 new community-based firefighters, investing in equipment and other measures to reduce risks from wildfire and supporting fire management by Indigenous communities.
- In close collaboration with the Ministers of Indigenous Services, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Minister of Northern Affairs, work with First Nations and provincial and territorial government partners to strengthen the governance and service delivery for First Nations emergency preparedness, management and recovery.
- Support the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities to build on the foundation of the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund and continue seeking opportunities to scale the construction of climate-resilient infrastructure across Canada, with a particular emphasis on communities most at risk.

As Minister, you are also responsible for actively engaging with your Cabinet and Caucus colleagues. As we deliver on our platform commitments, it will be important that members of the Ministry continue to collaborate and work constructively to support rigorous and productive Cabinet decision-making. I expect you to support your colleagues in delivering their commitments, leveraging the expertise of your department and your own lived experiences.

To best achieve results for Canadians, Ministers must be rigorous and coordinated in our approach to implementation. I would therefore ask that you return to me with a proposed approach for the delivery of your mandate commitments, including

priorities for early implementation. Furthermore, to ensure we are accountable for our work, I will be asking you to publicly report to me, and all Canadians, on your progress toward these commitments on a regular basis.

As we have been reminded throughout the pandemic, adapting to change is not only something government should do, it is something government must do. As you work to fulfil our commitments, I expect you to actively consider new ideas and issues as they emerge, whether through public engagement, your work with Parliamentarians or advice from the public service. I also expect you to work with your Deputy Minister to assess priorities on a continual basis as we build a better future for all Canadians. In addition to achieving results, you are responsible for overseeing the work of your department and ensuring the effective operation of your portfolio.

As you staff your office and implement outreach and recruitment strategies for federally appointed leadership positions and boards, I ask that you uphold the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion. This helps ensure that federal workplaces are dynamic and reflective of the Canadians we serve. You will also ensure your Minister's office and portfolio are reflective of our commitment to healthy and safe workplaces.

Canadians expect us to work hard, speak truthfully and be committed to advancing their interests and aspirations. When we make mistakes – as we all will – Canadians expect us to acknowledge them, and most importantly, to learn from them.

I know I can count on you to fulfill the important responsibilities entrusted in you, and to turn to me, and the Deputy Prime Minister, early and often to support you in your role as Minister.

Sincerely,



Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada